

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier University



Laurier to host panel discussion on electoral reform referendum

For Immediate Release

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WATERLOO — A panel discussion on the upcoming provincial referendum on electoral reform will be held at Wilfrid Laurier University Wednesday, September 19 from 4 to 6 p.m.

The referendum, to be held October 10, asks whether Ontarians wish to adopt the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform and move to a mixed member proportional (MMP) electoral system, or retain the current first-past-the-post electoral system.

The current system tends to over-reward winners, such as in 1990 when the New Democratic Party won 57 percent of the seats with just 37 percent of the votes, or in 2003 when the Liberals won 70 percent of the seats with 46 percent of the vote. Under the proposed system, the number of ridings would be reduced to 90 from 129 and candidates in those ridings, or electoral districts, would be elected as they are now. However, voters would vote twice under MMP — once for a local member, and once for a political party. Political parties would nominate candidates as List Members and, if a political party is entitled to more seats than it won locally, List Members would be chosen to make up the difference.

The Ontario Legislature would still have 129 seats, but 90 would be occupied by elected members who represent ridings, and 39 would be List Members. A party would have to receive at least three percent of the vote to elect List Members to the legislature.

The panel discussion at Laurier will explain the new system and debate its merits and demerits. The panelists will be:

- Brian Tanguay, chair of the Department of Political Science at Laurier
- James Breithaupt, former MPP
- Ran VanKoughnett, member of the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform
- David Docherty, Laurier dean of arts and moderator.

The discussion will be held in Room 110 of Laurier's Bricker Academic Building on Bricker Street. A reception will follow at the WLU Grad Pub from 6 to 8 p.m.